

What is claimed is:

- 1 **1.** A method comprising:
2 receiving, at a data processing system, a requirement from a prospective purchaser for a first
3 chemical;
4 comparing, in said data processing system, said requirement to analyses of batches of said
5 first chemical that are available for purchase through said data processing system to identify a batch
6 that satisfies said requirement; and
7 outputting, from said data processing system, an indicium of said identified batch to said
8 prospective purchaser.
- 1 **2.** The method of claim 1 wherein said analyses are stored in an inventory database in said
2 data processing system.
- 1 **3.** The method of claim 1 further comprising obtaining said analyses from a testing facility
2 that tests samples of said batches in accordance with a uniform standard that is established for said
3 first chemical.
- 1 **4.** The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 compiling statistics in said data processing system, said statistics comprising information
3 about purchases of said first chemical and purchases of other chemicals facilitated by said data
4 processing system; and
5 outputting said statistics to a statistics subscriber.
- 1 **5.** The method of claim 1 further comprising storing said requirement in a requirements
2 database.

1 6. The method of claim 2 further comprising:
2 updating said inventory database by obtaining further analyses of further batches of said first
3 chemical, wherein said further batches are analyzed in accordance with a uniform standard
4 established for said first chemical; and
5 inputting said further analyses into said inventory database.

1 7. The method of claim 6 further comprising:
2 updating said inventory database by obtaining analyses of batches of a second chemical,
3 wherein said batches are analyzed in accordance with a uniform standard established for said second
4 chemical; and
5 inputting said analyses of batches of said second chemical into said inventory database.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein said identified batch of said first chemical
2 is priced below a price at which said first chemical is normally sold.

1 9. A method comprising:
2 establishing a uniform standard for a chemical, the uniform standard including a
3 supplier-independent set of physical and chemical characteristics of said chemical;
4 analyzing, according to said uniform standard, a first sample of a batch of said chemical from
5 a first supplier and a second sample of a batch of said chemical from a second supplier; and
6 inputting analyses of said first sample and analyses of said second sample into a data
7 processing system.

1 10. The method of claim 9 further comprising storing said analyses of said first sample and
2 said analyses of said second sample in an inventory database.

1 11. The method of claim 9 further comprising receiving, at said data processing system, a
2 requirement from a prospective purchaser for said chemical.

1 **12.** The method of claim 11 further comprising comparing, in said data processing
2 system, said requirement to said analyses of said first sample and said second sample.

1 **13.** The method of claim 12 further comprising determining, via said data processing system,
2 if said analyses of said first sample and said second sample satisfy said requirement for said
3 chemical.

1 **14.** A method comprising:
2 outputting, from a data processing system, a uniform standard for a chemical, said
3 uniform standard defined by a supplier-independent set of physical and chemical characteristics of
4 said chemical; and
5 receiving, at said data processing system, a requirement from a prospective purchaser for said
6 chemical, said requirement comprising an allowable range of values for at least some of said physical
7 and chemical characteristics that define said uniform standard.

1 **15.** The method of claim 14 further comprising storing said requirement in said data
2 processing system.

1 **16.** The method of claim 14 further comprising comparing, via said data processing system,
2 said requirement to analyses of batches of said chemical that are available for purchase through said
3 data processing system.

1 **17.** The method of claim 16 further comprising outputting, from said data processing system,
2 an indicium of a batch of said chemical that satisfies said requirement.

1 **18.** A method for selling a non-branded product, comprising:
2 analyzing, according to a uniform standard, a sample of a batch of a chemical
3 supplied by a first supplier;
4 inputting analyses of said sample into a data processing system; and
5 outputting, from said data processing system to a prospective purchaser, an indicium of said
6 batch if said analyses satisfies a requirement for said chemical established by said prospective
7 purchaser, wherein said indicium does not identify said batch by supplier, by brand name or other
8 identifying designation.

1 **19.** The method of claim 18 further comprising offering said batch for sale at a price that is
2 lower than an offering price of branded batches of said chemical of said first supplier.

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